1. How do I find the new municipal valuation of my home?

Go to <https://www.knysna.gov.za/live-here/rates-and-services-valuation-roll/>

Press the Control key on your computer while you click on the above link. The municipal website will appear. Scroll down to “General valuation roll 2023 – 2028”. Click on this and six new lines will appear on your screen. Click on the top line – KNYSNA FULL GV… and all 485 pages of the roll will appear. Press Control and the F (for Find) key. A small space will open up in the top right hand corner of your screen. Type in your surname or the name of the trust which owns your home and press the execute key. The computer will quickly scroll through the long list and stop when it finds your name. If you have a popular surname like, say, Williams, you will have to press the execute key several times until the right “williams” comes up. On your screen will be a single line with the vital information on your home and the municipality’s estimate of its market value.

1. How do I check to see whether the new valuation of my property is reasonable?

The best way is to look at the valuation role and compare your valuation with similar properties in your area. This is easy because above and below the line of information on your property will be details of other properties in your area.

1. What are the factors that could affect the market price of a property?

Firstly, the size, age and condition of the building or buildings on your plot will be key factors. The bigger the more valuable and buildings in good condition are worth more than those in need of care. Here all defects should be listed from leaking rooves to cracking walls etc. This is obvious but it is necessary to state the obvious because your building has not been subjected to an individual inspection. The municipal valuation is little more than an estimation based on limited information.

Secondly, environmental factors can add or reduce the value of your house. People prefer to live in quiet, safe areas so they are prepared to pay more for properties in attractive suburbs. In a town like Knysna the view from your property is important. A good view can add many hundreds of thousands of rands to the value of your property. If your view is blocked by another building your home will be worth a lot less. Again this is obvious but it must be stated because there has been no inspection of your property.

Negative environmental factors reduce the value of your home. Examples are a lack of privacy, noise and pollution problems from busy roads, smells from industry or broken sewage pipes and exposure to rough weather and flooding. Even problems like low water pressure can be big negatives as this makes gardening difficult and the ability to extinguish a fire is reduced.

Thirdly, there are social problems. Homes in areas where the crime rate is high are worth less than homes in safer areas. Other social problems can include vagrancy and untidy informal traders.

Finally there is the baboon problem. Baboons can be dangerous and people do not want to buy homes in areas where baboons are a menace, especially to children and the elderly.

1. What happens if I do not appeal against the new valuation?

The municipality will assume that the valuation is fair and your property rates will be based in the new valuation.

1. What happens if I appeal against the valuation of my property?

The municipality will charge you rates based on the new valuation until your appeal has been decided. If your home has been overvalued, and you win your appeal, you will be entitled to a refund, probably in the form of a credit.

1. If your home has been undervalued and the municipal authorities discover this in the appeal process will they revalue your home, increase your rates and demand “back pay”?

We believe that the municipality is locked in to the value they have now given unless it is too high and an appeal against it is successful. We cannot envisage how they would come to the conclusion that the value is too low unless someone, like an unfriendly neighbour, objects. But there again, we believe you can only object to the valuation of your own property unless you get written authority from the owner.

1. All the valuations are supposed to be based on market value on July 1, 2022, but what happens if I have improved or extended my property since then?

We believe that improvements brought about since the valuation date cannot be taken into account but they may be subject to re-evaluation on a supplementary roll.

1. What happens if the value of my property has decreased since the valuation date as a result of, say, a detached granny flat burning down?

After the 2017 fires, owners who lost their homes in the fires could appeal for the review of their rates based on the fact that the home had been destroyed. We see no reason why a reduction in rates should not be implemented if such a disaster strikes at any time.

1. How will temporary accommodation such as a motor home or a movable wooden structure be valued?

These are moveables and should not be taken into account when evaluating the property.

1. How long will it take to deal with all the appeals?

(Help please.)

1. Is the appeal decision final or can I go to a “higher court”?

One is entitled to appeal any administrative decision with which you are not happy, but the costs will probably outweigh the ultimate benefit unless the value is ludicrously high.